

**SUMMARY OF THE
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2000**

The Proficiency Testing Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference, on Tuesday, February 8, 2000. The meeting was led by its chair, Ms. Barbara Burmeister of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. *The main purpose of this meeting was to discuss the PT Fields of Testing and Acceptance Criteria (including analytes under the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act), scheduling for the committee's upcoming face-to-face meeting, and the possible restructuring of the NELAC Fields of Testing.*

INTRODUCTION

The status of the Action Items from the teleconference on January 25, 1999 is as follows:

- Ms. Barbara Burmeister submitted the Section 2.0 Interim Guidance Document to Ms. Jeanne Hankins, the Transition Committee, and the NELAP Accrediting Authority Group for final review and adoption.
- Mr. Matt Caruso and Mr. Chuck Wibby added new analytes from the UCMR (Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule) to the PT Fields of Testing list and submitted the revised list to the PT Committee, Transition Committee, the NELAP Accrediting Authority Group, and Ms. Hankins.
- Ms. Marykay Steinman made revisions to the FAQs, but is waiting for a flowchart which illustrates the proficiency testing requirements for initial accreditation.
- After the minutes from the Regulatory Coordination Committee are published, the committee will discuss questions about fields of testing and matrices raised by Mr. George Avery at the last interim meeting. Then, Ms. Burmeister will contact the Program Policy and Structure Committee.
- Ms. Burmeister notified the Membership and Outreach Committee that Ms. Cindy Nettrour is the PT Committee's designated liaison.

PT FIELDS OF TESTING AND ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA LIST

Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) Analytes

Initially, there are 9 analytes from the UCMR list that the committee intends to add to the PT FOT list. Because there may not be enough historical data to develop regression equations, the committee planned to use robust statistical analysis (mean \pm two standard deviations) as the scoring method for PT samples.

One argument against adding the UCMR analytes was that the data falls under the "experimental data" category. However, another argument was that if the committee waits for valid historical data to develop fixed acceptance limits, then there will be no incentive for accreditation programs

to include the chemicals. Mr. Chuck Wibby and Mr. Matt Caruso will assemble data from existing PT programs and review concentration data.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)-Water Analytes

The committee discussed PTs for RCRA-water analytes. Mr. Wibby said that the main difference between EPA test Method 625 (Clean Water Act) and Method 8270 (RCRA) is that RCRA generally requires higher recovery than the Clean Water Act. It was suggested that, initially, Water Pollution PT samples could serve dual functionality (both WP and RCRA). Adjustments would need to be made to the concentration ranges. Since the RCRA concentration ranges are lower, laboratories would need to make dilutions of the WP samples in order to use them for RCRA, Mr. Wibby agreed to draft a new FAQ on this subject.

NELAP AA Group Teleconference

Ms. Burmeister has been invited to attend the NELAP AA Group teleconference on February 8, 2000. She said that the subject of the meeting will be the PT Fields of Testing and Acceptance Criteria list. Ms. Burmeister hopes to receive approval of the list and an effective implementation date.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Revisions by Ms. Marykay Steinman have been completed, with the exception of including a flowchart on initial PT accreditation. Mr. Larry Jackson was unable to attend this meeting, so Ms. Burmeister said that she will email him about the status of the flowchart.

FACE-TO-FACE COMMITTEE MEETING

The committee discussed possible dates for their face-to-face meeting before NELAC VI. One possibility was April 11-12, 2000. However, Mr. David Friedman suggested the committee consider holding their face-to-face meeting so that it coincides with the upcoming Quality Assurance Division (QAD) conference in Albuquerque, NM. The committee agreed that this might be a good idea, since several of the members will be attending that conference. Mr. Friedman said that he will email schedule details for the QAD conference to Ms. Burmeister. He also said that he would check to see if a meeting room could be arranged for the committee.

PT MATRIX AND FIELDS OF TESTING (REGULATORY COORDINATION COMMITTEE)

NELAC Fields of Testing are currently structured by program-method-analyte. In their minutes, on December 16, 1999, the Regulatory Coordination Committee proposed that the NELAC Scope of Accreditation be defined by matrix and test method. The reason for this is that although test methods seem to be fairly consistent among the 11 approved AAs, the analytes listed under those methods are not consistent from state to state.

The PT Committee reviewed the proposed language changes which were drafted by Mr. George Avery. One committee member expressed concern that these changes may force accreditation programs into a two-tier program. Another member said that by using test method to define the

Fields of Testing, there is the possibility of continually subdividing the FOTs (as technology changes). The committee does not see this as a problem for PTs, but maybe a problem for accreditation.

The only change proposed for Chapter 2 is the addition of the following in Section 2.7.1:

“A grade of “acceptable” is awarded when the laboratory successfully analyzes 80% of the analytes defined for a field of testing.”

The committee had included an 80% rule in an older version of the standards, but the language has been removed. The committee agreed that it would be easy to resurrect the old language if necessary. Ms. Burmeister said that she will contact Ms. Marcia Davies (from Chapter 1) and discuss the possible restructuring of the NELAC FOTs.

MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE LIAISON

The designated liaison from the PT Committee to the Membership and Outreach Committee is Ms. Cindy Nettrour.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Friedman asked that an explanation of “RSA” (robust statistical analysis) be added as a footnote to the bottom of the PT acceptance criteria table. This was previously included and had been removed by mistake. It will be added back in.

ACTION ITEMS

PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2000

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Ms. Barbara Burmeister will email the committee her new phone number.	date of face-to-face meeting (April ?, 2000)
2.	Mr. Chuck Wibby and Mr. Matt Caruso will review existing data on UCMR analytes in the WP and determine acceptance criteria and concentration ranges.	
3.	Mr. Wibby will draft a new FAQ for RCRA-water analytes.	
4.	Ms. Burmeister will email Mr. Larry Jackson about the flowchart on initial PT accreditation for the FAQs.	
5.	Mr. David Friedman will email schedule information for the QAD conference to Ms. Burmeister. This conference dates will be considered in planning the committee's upcoming face-to-face meeting.	
6.	Ms. Burmeister will email the Program Policy and Structure Committee (Chapter 1) about the restructuring of NELAP Fields of Testing.	

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PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2000**

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